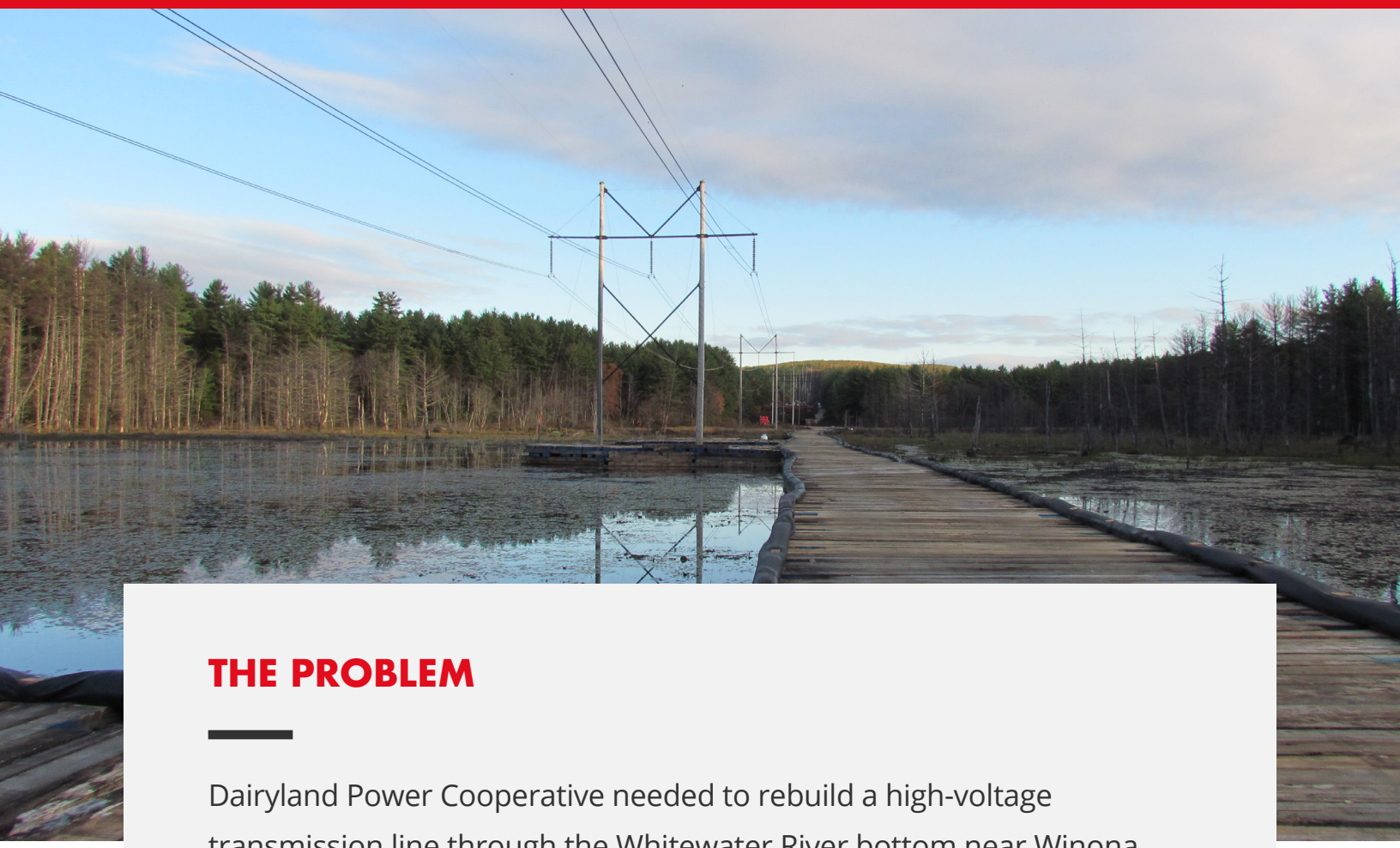
WETLAND ACCESS IN A RIVER BOTTOM

METRICS

- **3,300** linear feet of transmission lines
- **150,000** square feet of wetlands protected
- **$20,000+** savings in restoration costs

BACKGROUND

Dairyland Power Cooperative in La Crosse, Wisconsin, provides the wholesale generation and transmission electrical requirements for 24 distribution cooperatives and 17 municipal utilities. The cooperative's customers supply energy for more than a half-million people across a 44,500 square-mile service area in four midwestern states. Electricity is delivered via 3,200 miles of transmission lines and 281 substations.



THE PROBLEM

Dairyland Power Cooperative needed to rebuild a high-voltage transmission line through the Whitewater River bottom near Winona, Minnesota, including a sensitive wetland and wildlife management area owned by the state. To complete the project, the company needed to access the marsh safely and with minimal environmental impact.

THE SOLUTION

To assess the site access needs of the project, NEW SOUTH—a YAK ACCESS company—surveyed the site on foot and via helicopter. Based on the assessment, the team employed the emtek® Wetland Access System and designed it to accommodate the unstable soil conditions, the expected volume of traffic, and the load of a 100-ton crane.

THE RESULTS

The customized access solution that NEW SOUTH implemented kept the project on schedule and provided a safe work environment. Because the temporary road had such little impact, the wetland vegetation recovered with no restoration work—and associated costs—required. This positively impacted the budget, leading to more than $20,000 in savings.

By using a protective approach, rather than the “destroy-and-restore” method with traditional timber mats, the access solution protected 150,000 square feet of wetlands. A third-party study found that the emtek® system had minimal impact on soil compaction and vegetation and would not harm plant growth.

THE FUTURE

Due to the financial and ecological implications of using the emtek® system instead of a traditional temporary access road, the company learned the many benefits of a customized approach to site access. The emtek® system has been used in hundreds of transmission line projects for utility companies across the country, including creating a floating road to access a distribution system on a remote island in Maine.

The right solution, in the right place, at the right time.

YAK ACCESS

Discuss the details of your next site access project.

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